

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 0281

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, ELAB, PA

SUBJ: POLICE PRODUCE "EVIDENCE" AGAINST LABOR LEADERS AND PRIMERO
DE MARZO GROUP

REF: ASUNCION 256

1. INVESTIGATIONS POLICE CHIEF PASTOR CORONEL JANUARY 18 HOSTED A MEETING OF SENOR COLORADO PARTY LEADERS TO BRIEF THEM ON THE CURRENT SUBVERSIVE DANGERS AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE--SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE, ARMS, AMMUNITION AND DISGUISES--WHICH HE ALLEGES PROVES THE GUILT OF THE 19 CHRISTIAN LABOR LEADERS ARRESTED IN DECEMBER AND THE RECENTLY UNCOVERED "PRIMERO DE MARZO" CONSPIRACY. THE PRESS CARRIED PICTURES OF THE DISPLAY BUT WHETHER IT WAS COMPOSED OF MATERIALS KEPT BY THE POLICE TO BE TROTTED OUT FOR SUCH SHOWS OR ACTUALLY REPRESENTS SOLID EVIDENCE IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE.

2. INTRODUCING THE MEETING, INTERIOR MINISTER MONTARNARO PRAISED
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PASTOR CORONEL AND WENT ON TO TALK OF REVIVING A "GUARDIA URBANA" COMPOSED OF COLORADO PARTY STALWARTS. IN THE PAST THIS WAS A LOOSELY ORGANIZED VIGILANTE-TYPE ORGANIZATION. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT STROESSNER WAS IDENTIFIED AS SUPPORTING THE MEETING, THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE DOUBTS VERY MUCH THE PRESIDENT WOULD PERMIT THE REVIVAL OF SUCH A GROUP.

3 . THE COLORADO PARTY NEWSPAPER "PATRIA" CARRIED AN ARTICLE AT THE SAME TIME CRITICIZING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN THE LABOR LEADERS' CASE AND SUGGESTING THAT FOREIGN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS' ACTIVITIES IN PARAGUAY, PARTICULARLY AIFLD'S, BE INVESTIGATED. THIS SEEMS TO BE A VEILED THREAT OF RETALIATION FOR AIFLD'S RECENT HIGHLY PUBLICIZED SUPPORT OF THE ARRESTED LABOR LEADERS, NOTABLY BILL DOHERTY'S VISIT. WE WILL WATCH CLOSELY TO SEE WHETHER AIFLD REP TORRES LAZO OR AIFLD ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO ANY TYPE OF HARASSMENT. (NOTE: PATRIA USUALLY REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF THE MOST REACTIONARY ELEMENTS IN THE COLORADO PARTY.)

4. THE CLAIM BY THE REACGIONARIES THAT THERE IS CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF SUBVERSION IN THE CASE OF THE ARRESTED LABOR LEADERS CONTRADICTS THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND LABOR'S STATEMENT (GIVEN FULL PLAY IN THE PRESS THE DAY BEFORE THE MONTANARO-CORONEL MEETING) THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM. IT IS APPARENTLY A REACTION TO MOUNTING DEMANDS THAT THE LABOR LEADERS BE RELEASED FOR LACK OF CAUSE AND THAT ANY MALTREATMENT OR TORTURE OF THE PRISONERS BY THE POLICE BE PUNISHED. THE REACTIONARIES APPARENTLY WANT TO LUMP THE PRIMERO DE MARZO AND TRADE UNION PEOPLE TOGETHER, ADD A DASH OF SINISTER FOREIGNERS AND HOPE THAT EVERYONE WILL BE BLINDED TO THE FACT THAT WHAT THEY LACK IS EVIDENCE.

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